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Baldwin: Government's Treatment Of Hmong 'Cruel, Cold'

Money Stops Jan. 1

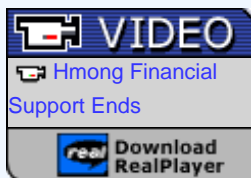
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MADISON, Wis. -- Congresswoman Tammy Baldwin calls the U.S. treatment of some Hmong refugees "cruel and cold," and she's fighting to help.

Last week, News 3 showed you how one Madison Hmong family is on the verge of losing its social security benefits.

The situation stems from a law signed in August of 1996, stating refugees have seven years to become citizens or they lose social security disability benefits.



That's what will happen to Yang Vang, a senior at Lafollette High School, and his family, including his father who fought for years side-by-side with U.S. soldiers in Laos against the Viet-Cong.

Both of Yang's parents are disabled now and don't speak English. Their paperwork is pending, but citizenship won't happen fast enough. Their checks stop Jan. 1.



"It's absolutely heartbreaking," Baldwin said. "They're in such a unique circumstance with the language barriers, which are steeper barriers than other refugee groups face because there was not a written language."

That's just one problem for the Hmong community. Another is many are not getting their notices from immigration because they must tell the feds every time they move -- filling out a change of address at

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the post office isn't good enough.

For any refugee, it can take a year-and-a-half to sort through all the red tape.

Baldwin told News 3 the United States should give waivers to this unique group, but she said the chances the Bush administration would support that "are very slim."

You Can Help

Since News 3 aired the story, many have asked how they can help. A fund has been set up at Anchor Bank. You can send donations to any branch under Yang Vang or the Vang family.

Also, a church group has stepped forward to pay the family's January rent as a first step.

Vang told News 3 his family is very, very grateful.

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


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